

Heart of the Neighborhood

Introduction

The Lavaca Neighborhood contains a rich mixture of historic housing and opportunities for economic development offering the neighborhood a unique opportunity to maintain its historic character and revitalize its business corridor.

The goals, objectives, and action steps developed through the planning process brought the issues of housing conservation, maintenance and infill development to the forefront of the neighborhood's vision for the future. Additionally, building on the successes of existing businesses and attracting new destination and neighborhood service businesses were clearly defined priorities for the future.

Key to accomplishing this new vision for the future, is the development of partnerships between residents, businesses, community organizations, government agencies, financial institutions and others, which are clearly identified in the actions steps developed in this section of the text.

Encompassing all the identified issues is a comprehensive land use plan designed to illustrate the desire future use of the land in the Lavaca Neighborhood.



New commercial development along S. Presa St.



Existing neighborhood homes

Goal 1: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Improve the overall economic health of the neighborhood through the enhancement of existing businesses and services, and the promotion of small business development.

Objective 1.1: Small Business Development

Encourage the redevelopment of neighborhood commercial establishments through enforcement of code compliance, improvement of business appearances, reinstitution of neighborhood clean ups, utilization of vacant buildings and attraction of new neighborhood businesses.

Action Steps:

1.1.1 Conduct a survey of commercial properties with suspected code compliance violations in an effort to 1) decrease the number of hazardous structures, 2) improve the overall appearance of existing neighborhood businesses and vacant properties, and 3) clean up vacant buildings/properties, so that they are more attractive to potential neighborhood business owners.

- *The survey should identify each property, its suspected violations and its priority in relation to area properties.*
- *Contact should also be initiated with the City's Code Compliance Department and District 1 City Council Office to assist with code compliance in order to improve appearance and safety of commercial properties.*

Lead Partner:
Lavaca NA

Partnerships:
Southtown, District 1 Council Office, COSA (Code Compliance, Neighborhood Action Dept.- Neighborhood Sweep Program), Business/commercial property owners

Timeline:
Immediate (under 1 year)

Funding Sources:
No funding needed



Existing neighborhood business development along S. Presa St.



Existing neighborhood restaurant

“Neighborhood Conservation District designation protects and strengthens the desirable and unique physical features, design characteristics, and recognized identity, charm and flavor of neighborhoods.”

- NCD Q&A Brochure

1.1.2 Explore the potential for creating a Neighborhood Conservation District (NCD) along S. Presa St. and S. St. Mary's St. to protect and enhance the existing building and streetscape character on these commercial corridors. *(See Appendix A-14)*

- *The NCD could be used to a) conserve the existing commercial building character and streetscape, b) stabilize commercial property values, c) encourage compatible infill development, d) the optimize usage of vacant properties/buildings and e) develop new neighborhood businesses.*
- *The commercial corridor could be an independent NCD or a section of a larger NCD within the neighborhood.*

1.1.3 Discourage future development of bars and encourage better operation and management of existing bars within the neighborhood.

- *Encourage existing bars to dispense alcoholic beverages responsibly and in accordance with local and state laws.*
- *Increase efforts to report illegal activities that occur at establishments serving alcohol.*
- *Monitor the quality control and health standards for food products sold at establishments.*
- *Establish relationship with SAISD legal representatives to identify neighborhood positions on management of existing and future bars.*

Lead Partner:

Lavaca NA

Partnerships:

COSA (Planning Dept.), Southtown Urban Main Street Program, King William Assn., SA Conservation Society, Business/property owners

Timeline:

Immediate (under 1 year)

Funding Sources:

Little to no funds required

Lead Partner:

Lavaca Cellular On Patrol

Partnerships:

COSA (SAPD, SAFFE Officer, Code Compliance, Metropolitan Health District), Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission, Bar owners, Bar owners' association, Lavaca NA, King William Assn., Southtown, SAISD (Brackenridge HS, Bonham ES)

Timeline:

Short (1-3 years)

Funding Sources:

Little to no funds required

1.1.4 Encourage a limited amount of small-scale neighborhood commercial development within the Victoria Courts redevelopment area and along the Labor Street corridor.

- *Commercial development should be small-scale establishments such as a: gift shop, flower shop, hair salon, bakery, convenience store, video rental store or small restaurant.*
- *New neighborhood commercial development should accommodate no more than 10,000 square feet.*
- *Redevelopment and improvement of existing commercial properties is encouraged along Labor Street, however additional commercial development is discouraged.*

Lead Partner:

Victoria Courts Redevelopment Team, Neighborhood Plan Implementation Team

Partnerships:

Lavaca NA, King William Assn., COSA (San Antonio Business Assistance Focus Center), UTSA Small Business Development Center

Timeline:

Short – Long (1-10 years)

Funding Sources:

Local financial institutions, local business

1.1.5 Encourage reinvestment on the existing commercial corridors (*S. Presa St. and S. St. Mary's St.*) in the Lavaca planning area. Small, neighborhood scale destination commercial development or mixed uses, such as live/work units, are highly desired to improve economic health of the neighborhood and provide a wider range of services for residents.

- *Small family-owned businesses are highly desirable to provide new services such as: dry cleaning, bakery, small fast food establishments, book store, barber shop, small neighborhood theater, pharmacy, coffee shop, etc.*
- *Specific properties should be targeted for*

Lead Partner:

Neighborhood Plan Implementation Team

Partnerships:

Southtown Urban Main Street Program-Lavaca NA, King William Assn., COSA (Economic Development, San Antonio Business Assistance Focus Center), UTSA Small Business Development Center

Timeline:

Short – Long (1-10 years)

Funding Sources:

Local financial institutions, local business chains, local/state/federal small business funding programs



Residential structure adapted to a commercial use.

reinvestment, especially those that are vacant and/or in need of improvement as identified in the survey of commercial properties. (Action Step 1.1.1)

- *Begin fostering relationships with financial institutions that will help provide funds for business development, infrastructure development, building façade improvements, and design enhancements (i.e. public art).*

1.1.6 Establish a working relationship with the General Services Administration to provide community input for the future design of a new Federal Courts System building, which may be located in the existing Federal Courts System parking lot. The objective of this relationship would be to promote a building design that integrates well with the scale and character of the neighborhood.

Lead Partner:

Lavaca NA

Partnerships:

General Services Administration (US Gov't), COSA (Planning Dept.), Texas Historical Commission, SA Conservation Society, Southtown Urban Main Street Program, Victoria Courts Redevelopment Team

Timeline:

Short (1-3 years)

Funding Sources:

No funding needed

1.1.7 Conduct a marketing/recruitment campaign to attract more businesses into the Lavaca neighborhood. The campaign focus should:

- *Target businesses that are compatible with the neighborhood and consistent with the existing Southtown Urban Main Street Market Study.*
- *Address strategic advantages/disadvantages of attracting different types of businesses.*

Lead Partner:

Neighborhood Plan Implementation Team

Partnerships:

Southtown Urban Main Street Program, COSA (Economic Development), Financial Institutions, Realtors, Lavaca NA, King William Assn.

Timeline:

Mid – Long (3-10 years)

- *Market existing successful neighborhood businesses.*
- *Implement a window display program for vacant building storefronts.*
- *Work with commercial property owners and realtor to set rental rates that will attract new tenant businesses to develop in the commercial areas of the neighborhood.*

Funding Sources:

Local financial institutions, local business chains, local/state/federal small business funding programs, fundraisers, City Council District 1 discretionary funds.

1.1.8 Encourage more efficient street lighting and lighting of individual commercial structures along S. Presa and S. St. Mary's Streets.

- *A program to provide funds for commercial lighting improvements should be included in the improvement effort.*
- *The "perception" of inadequate safety can be addressed with an improved lighting plan.*
- *Improvement of street lighting from Durango Blvd. south along S. Alamo St. is a priority.*

Lead Partner:

Neighborhood Plan Implementation Team, Business owners, Southtown Urban Main Street Program

Partnerships:

Lavaca NA, , COSA (Public Wks. Neighborhood Action Dept. (NCR Program), City Public Service, King William Assn., District 1 Council Office, SA Conservation Society, Financial institutions

Timeline:

Mid (3-5 years)

Funding Sources:

Southtown Urban Main Street Program, District 1 Council Office, Financial institutions, COSA Bonds/General Operating Budget

1.1.9 Support better off-street parking design and shared parking programs between businesses along S. Presa, S. St. Mary's, and S. Alamo Sts. and other institutions in the neighborhood.

- *Research parking needs and requirements for businesses through the new Unified Development Code and Southtown Market*

Lead Partner:

Neighborhood Plan Implementation Team, Business Owners

Partnerships:

Lavaca NA, Southtown Urban Main Street Program, King William Assn., SAISD, SADA, COSA (Planning-Historic Preservation Office, District 1 Council Off., Public Works Dept.)

Study & Revitalization Plan.

- *Encourage parking areas to be located to the rear of buildings for new construction.*
- *Explore trade-off issues between new infill development and additional parking in order to encourage the best use of available land*

Timeline:

Mid (3-5 years)

Funding Sources:

District 1 Council Office, Private developers, SAISD, SADA

1.1.10 Improve the pedestrian environment and usage of neighborhood businesses and services by improving the pedestrian linkages between downtown and the Lavaca Neighborhood. Durango Blvd. and Labor St. (if re-opened to Durango Blvd.) could eliminate much of the perceived physical and visual barriers between downtown and the Lavaca neighborhood, and provide an enhanced environment to encourage patronage of local businesses by downtown residents and visitors.

- *Improvement of streetscapes and landscaping along the commercial corridors and across Durango Blvd. should be a focus to draw people from downtown.*
- *Wayfinding elements/signage should be explored to complement both streetscape improvements and the planned Mission Trails signage program.*
- *Improvements should be coordinated with the marketing campaign (see 1.1.6).*

Lead Partner:

Neighborhood Plan Implementation Team

Partnerships:

Southtown Urban Main Street Program, COSA (Economic Dev. Dept., Convention and Visitors Bureau, Alamodome Dept., Public Works Dept.), Lavaca NA, King William Assn., Community business owners, Downtown Residents Assn.

Timeline:

Short – Long (1-10 years)

Funding Sources:

City of San Antonio, San Antonio Housing Authority

1.1.11 Limit further development of industrial uses within the neighborhood in order to preempt additional environmental nuisances.

Lead Partner:

Neighborhood Plan Implementation Team

- *Existing environmental nuisances are to be explored (See Places Where We Play, Gather & Learn, Objective 3.2). Owners of existing businesses that are industrial in nature should be encouraged to relocate businesses to more environmentally appropriate and/or industrial zone sites.*

Partnerships:

Southtown Urban Main Street Program, COSA (Economic Dev. Dept.), SADA (Environmental Dept.), Real Estate community, Lavaca NA, King William Assn.

Timeline:

Mid – Long (3-10 years)

Funding Sources:

Property owners

Objective 1.2: Neighborhood supermarket

Explore potential for attracting a new neighborhood supermarket *or* re-development/improvement of the existing grocery store.

Action Steps:

- 1.2.1** Explore the possibilities for attracting a new supermarket into the neighborhood, preferably a store from a major grocery chain. Encourage the development of a new store to be at an appropriate scale and building character to compliment the neighborhood.

- *Many neighborhood residents do not own vehicles, and rely on pedestrian/bicycle access to grocery service. It is important to maintain continuous grocery service and access availability with regard to future developments.*

Lead Partner:

Neighborhood Plan Implementation Team

Partnerships:

Lavaca NA, King William Association, Southtown Urban Mainstreet Program, Major grocery chains

Timeline:

Mid (3-5 years)

Funding Sources:

Little to no funds needed

- 1.2.2** Encourage the owners of the existing grocery store to improve the appearance, cleanliness and overall appearance of the facility and the produce and merchandise offered.

Lead Partner:

Neighborhood Plan Implementation Team

Partnerships:

Lavaca NA, King William Assn., Southtown, Handy Andy store owner/manager; (continued)

Partnerships: (Cont. from 1.2.2)
COSA (Metropolitan Health District, Code Compliance), Texas Department of Health

Timeline:
Immediate (Under 1 year)

Funding Sources:
Little to no funds required

Goal 2: HOUSING

Improve the overall quality of housing within the Lavaca Neighborhood.

Objective 2.1: Housing Character

Maintain the existing character of the historic residential buildings and encourage compatible infill housing within the neighborhood.



Residential structure characteristic of the Lavaca neighborhood



Residential structure characteristic of the Lavaca neighborhood

Action Steps:

2.1.1 Preserve the character of the historic housing stock in the Lavaca Neighborhood.

- *Continue process of local historic district designation through City of San Antonio.*
- *Investigate the potential for developing either a larger historic district or neighborhood conservation district. The advantages and disadvantages of these districts should be explored by the neighborhood with the City of San Antonio Planning Department (Historic Preservation Office; Neighborhood and Urban Design Division), the Texas Historical Commission and residents of other historic/conservation districts.*

Lead Partner:
Lavaca NA

Partnerships:
COSA (Planning Dept. Housing and Community Development, Neighborhood Action Depts.), Texas Historical Commission, SA Conservation Society, residential property owners

Timeline:
Immediate (Under 1 year)

Funding Sources:
No funds needed

- *Investigations into these designations should also include the use of the existing Lavaca Neighborhood Design Guidelines.*

2.1.2 Encourage compatible infill housing on vacant parcels throughout the neighborhood. Compatible housing will maintain the historical and architectural integrity of the neighborhood and help to better utilize vacant and/or unkempt properties.

- *A survey of successful infill housing projects in the neighborhood and around San Antonio should be produced to serve as a guide for future housing development.*
- *The Lavaca Neighborhood Design Guidelines should be used as a guide for compatible infill housing.*
- *Fostering relationships with agencies that can provide infill housing should be a priority to help with the process of utilizing vacant residential parcels and improving the quality of housing in the planning area.*
- *Identification of available funding sources for rehabilitation of homes along the 500 block of Leigh Street (across street from former Victoria Courts), will assist in the future complementary development on the north side of Leigh Street.*

2.1.3 New, infill housing may be accommodated by linking persons seeking viable housing with commercial property owners, whom for business expansion and improvement potential, intend to remove their originally "residential" structures from the commercial corridors. Property owners

Lead Partner:

Neighborhood Plan Implementation Team

Partnerships:

Lavaca NA, COSA (Housing and Community Development Dept., Neighborhood Action Dept.), Non-profit housing corporations

Timeline:

Short to Long (1-10 years)

Funding Sources:

City of San Antonio, Non-profit housing corporations

Lead Partners:

Residents, Business/Commercial property owners

Partnerships:

Lavaca NA, King William Assn., Southtown, COSA (Code Compliance, Planning-Historic Preservation Office, Neighborhood Action

should be encouraged to relocate their buildings to vacant lots within the neighborhood, if they do not to adaptively re-use the existing structure(s).

Dept., Neighborhood Conservation Districts staff, Development Services), City Public Service, SAWS, San Antonio Housing Authority, House moving businesses

Timeline:

Mid (3-5 years)

Funding Sources:

Home and business owners, developers

2.1.4 Encourage property owners to utilize responsible realtor and property management businesses to improve housing conditions through increased resident retention, stabilized property values, and improved rental property maintenance.

- *A session attended by Neighborhood Association leaders, Southtown and members of the real estate community who provide or desire to provide services in the neighborhood, could serve as an informational tool for accurately marketing or maintaining properties in the neighborhood.*

Lead Partner:

Real estate management companies

Partnerships:

Residential property owners, contractors, tenants

Timeline:

Short (1-3 years)

Funding Sources:

No funds needed

2.1.5 Explore the potential for creating a model housing block development within the planning area.

Lead Partner:

Neighborhood Plan Implementation Team

Partnerships:

Lavaca NA, residential property owners, COSA (Neighborhood Action Dept./Project Renew, Housing & Community Development Dept.), Non-profit housing corporations

Timeline:

Short (1-3 years)

Funding Sources:

Non-profit housing organizations

- 2.1.6** Explore use of green building and/or sustainable building techniques and solar systems when identifying infill or new development opportunities.

Lead Partner:

Lavaca NA

Partnership:

Vacant property owners, COSA (Neighborhood Action Dept.), Non-profit housing corporations, SAWS, SA Chapter of the American Institute of Architects

Timeline:

Mid (3-5 years)

Funding Sources:

SAWS, Product Manufacturers

Objective 2.2: Housing Improvement/Maintenance

Improve the quality of the existing neighborhood housing stock by encouraging property owners to maintain and upgrade residential structures and properties.

Action Steps:

- 2.2.1** Encourage landlords to improve the appearance and quality of rental properties in the neighborhood.

- *An educational program should be initiated to inform landlords about the advantages of improving their properties, as well as the potential for improving rental properties and selling them to new homeowners.*
- *Increased efforts will be necessary to contact and educate rental property owners that do not live in the area or the city.*
- *Renters should also be encouraged to help with the upkeep of residential rental properties.*

Lead Partner:

Lavaca NA

Partnerships:

COSA (Neighborhood Action Dept., Code Compliance, Housing and Community Development Dept.)

Timeline:

Immediate (ongoing)

Funding Sources:

Little to no funds required



Neighborhood home in need of repair and rehabilitation.

2.2.2 Enforce current yard parking ordinance (Part II, Chapter 19, Article VI, Division 2, Section 19-194), and fine structure owners, and encourage alternative parking surfaces.

Lead Partners:
COSA (Code Compliance)

Partnerships:
Lavaca Neighborhood Association

Timeline:
Immediate (Ongoing)

Funding Sources:
No funding needed

2.2.3 Address severe code compliance issues of “problem rental properties”.

- *Encourage owners of problem rental properties to apply to the Rental Rehabilitation Program (RRP). The RRP offers rental-property owners low-interest financing for up to 50% of the repair costs on a property with major structural damage to at least one major building component.*
- *Monitor the development of the “Incentive Tool Kit” to learn more about proposals to provide tax abatement incentives for rental rehabilitation.*
- *Support efforts to create stricter enforcement of code and zoning violations.*

Lead Partners:
Lavaca NA

Partnerships:
COSA (Neighborhood Action Dept., Code Compliance Dept. Housing and Community Development Dept.)

Timeline:
Immediate (Ongoing)

Funding Sources:
Little to no funds required

2.2.4 Increase funding for housing rehabilitation and new construction.

- *Sponsor applications for HOME funds.*
- *Support efforts to increase HOME funding amounts to address increasing costs for property acquisition and repair.*

Lead Partners:
Lavaca NA, Non-profit housing corporations,

Partnerships:
San Antonio Alternative Housing Corporation, COSA (Housing & Community Development Dept., City Manager’s Office, Neighborhood Action Dept.), Private Lenders, Homeowners

- *Encourage private investment in neighborhood housing.*
- *Develop incentives to encourage low and middle-income homeowners to initiate and complete home improvement projects. Increasing residents' awareness of housing repair and rehabilitation assistance programs will be essential to inform residents of opportunities to improve their properties*
- *Utilize targeted incentives to stimulate housing repair.*

Timeline:
Immediate (Ongoing)

Funding Sources:
HOME Funds, CDBG Funds

2.2.5 Increase the quantity and quality of trees and landscaping throughout the neighborhood to create a more natural and green streetscape.

- *Conduct a survey throughout the neighborhood to identify areas (both commercial and residential) that need landscaping and street trees*
- *Apply to the Neighborhood Improvement Challenge Program for funding of new trees and landscaping projects*
- *Request tree planting assistance from San Antonio Trees*

Lead Partner:
Lavaca NA

Partnerships:
Southtown, District 1 Council Office, Business/Commercial property owners, COSA (Planning, Building Insp.-Arborist Office), San Antonio Trees, Alamo Area Council on Government (AACOG)

Timeline:
Immediate (under 1 year)

Funding Sources:
Neighborhood Improvement Challenge Program, San Antonio Trees, Alamo Area Council on Government (AACOG)

2.2.6 Conduct a survey of residential properties with suspected code compliance violations in an effort to 1) decrease the number of hazardous structures, 2) decrease number of grossly overcrowded living structures, and 3) improve the overall appearance of vacant buildings to make more attractive to potential owners.

Lead Partner:
Lavaca NA

Partnerships:
District 1 Council Office, COSA (Code Compliance, Neighborhood Action Dept.- Neighborhood Sweep Program), Property owners



Well landscaped property along Martinez St.

- *The survey should identify each property, its suspected violations and its priority in relation to other area properties.*
- *Contact should also be initiated with the City's Code Compliance Department and District 1 City Council Office to correct violations in order to improve appearance and safety of residential properties.*
- *Careful consideration of the historical value of each structure should be given in the survey so as not to eliminate structures with significant historical character and value for the neighborhood.*

Timeline:

Immediate (under 1 year)

Funding Sources:

No funding needed

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